

Judges 14:6-20 - Thursday, January 31st, 2013

- We're going to pick it up where we left off last week with a comparison between Samson here in the Old Testament and Peter in the new.
- This because, there are some striking similarities between these two men in their progression, which had ultimately, led to their downfall.
- Both of these men made a series of seemingly nebulous mistakes along the way, but collectively, it would all lead to their failing and falling.

- By that I mean, while Samson and Peter failed in the areas of their greatest strength, it didn't happen overnight, rather, it was over time.
- For Samson over time, he would break a Nazirite vow to the Lord, and for Peter over time he would deny that he ever even knew the Lord.
- The common denominator in their failing and falling was pride, as that's what fueled their thinking they stood strong, which led to their fall.

1 Corinthians 10:12 NKJV (12) Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Proverbs 16:18 NIV Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

- It's for this reason that I would like to take just a little bit of time so as to further examine what I'll call, "the anatomy of failing and falling."
- In order to do that we'll first direct most of our attention to Peter and in so doing we'll be able to see more clearly the similarity with Samson.
- By way of an acrostic, or acronym, if you prefer, I put together seven things that led to Peter's fall, all of which spell the word "SATANIC."

Self-importance - (Matthew 16:13-20)

Matthew 16:13-20 13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" 14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 **Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** 17 Jesus replied, **"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.** 18 **And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.** 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. NIV

Arguing with the Lord - (Matthew 16:21-23, John 13:6-9)

Matthew 16:21-23 21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 **Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"** 23 **Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."** NIV

John 13:6-9 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 **"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."** Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" NIV

Time spent sleeping not praying - (Mark 14:32-38)

Mark 14:32-38 32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." 35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." 37 **Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."** NIV

Attacked a spiritual battle with fleshly weapons - (Luke 22:49-51)

Luke 22:49-51 49 When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" 50 **And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.** 51 But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him. NIV

Not following Jesus closely but from afar - (Luke 22:54)

Luke 22:54 Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. **Peter followed at a distance.** NIV

In the enemy's camp getting comfortable and warm - (Luke 22:55)

Luke 22:55 But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, **Peter sat down with them.** NIV

Confidence in his own ability to not deny Jesus - (Luke 22:31-34, 56-62)

Luke 22:31-34 31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." 33 But he replied, **"Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."** 34 **Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."** NIV

Luke 22:56-62 56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." 57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. 58 A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. 59 About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." 60 Peter replied, "Man, **I don't know what you're talking about!**" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 **The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."** 62 **And he went outside and wept bitterly.** NIV

- What hope would there be if Peter's failure and fall ended there? As we'll see in a moment, Jesus is not going to leave Peter there.
- As we'll see at the conclusion of our study of Samson, so too will the Lord not leave him there. Failing and falling won't have the last word.
- There is hope after a fall and a failure, and I'm of the belief that this is where Jesus is at His best, as evidenced in how he restores them.

John 21:15-17 15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." NIV

(6) And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though *he* had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. (7) Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. (8) After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey *were* in the carcass of the lion. (9) He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave *some* to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

- I want to point out a couple of things here, the first of which is, this is the second time Samson doesn't tell his parents what he had done.
- The reason I point this out is that he knows he's done wrong and broken his Nazirite vow, which is why he continues to hide it from them.
- Once again, we can learn a lesson from this in how that we are prone to hide that which we know is wrong. If it's right, we won't hide it.
- The second thing I want to point out is that he does this wrong and hides this wrong on the heels of having just been filled with the Spirit.
- The reason I point this out is that just because the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, doesn't mean he's automatically righteous.
- The lesson here is quite clear in that one can be filled with the Holy Spirit, but it doesn't automatically mean that they are spiritually mature.

(10) So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. (11) And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

- It's important to understand this feast was a drink fest, and as such it would become yet another occasion where Samson breaks his vow.
- I find it interesting that the Philistines would have to provide men for Samson's bachelor party, as it were, and that it takes place there.
- Here's what I'm thinking, Samson's father and mother probably forbid him to have a feast with the Philistines take place in their home.

(12) Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. (13) But if you cannot explain *it* to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing." And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."

- The thought here is that, because it was customary for the groom to give gifts to the groomsmen, Samson is devising a clever scheme.
- By way of a bet, he poses a riddle so as to wager thirty fine linen garments for these thirty groomsmen, so he doesn't have to pay for it.
- What's interesting about this is it would seem to indicate that Samson possessed, either naturally or supernaturally, a very good intellect.

- I think there's another lesson in this by virtue of how some people who are very gifted physically, and even intellectually, can still be fools.
- What I mean by that is, just because someone is smart, doesn't mean that they are wise. Wisdom and intelligence are not synonymous.
- I'm of the belief that Samson teaches us that it's possible to be physically strong and mentally smart, yet be spiritually weak and foolish.

(14) So he said to them: "Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet." Now for three days they could not explain the riddle. (15) But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that not so?*"

- It probably shouldn't come as any surprise they couldn't figure out the answer to the riddle, which is why Samson pose it in the first place.
- At the risk of reading too much into this, it does seem that what the Philistines lack in intellect they over compensate for in brutal threats.
- Often times, we're prone to do the same thing whenever we find ourselves lacking in a certain area, we over compensate in another area.

(16) Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained *it* to me." And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained *it* to my father or my mother; so should I explain *it* to you?"

- In all fairness to Samson's wife, you almost can't blame her for all this drama given that they threatened to burn her and both her parents.
- However, while this may explain it, it most certainly does not excuse it, in that she is using all her charm to both guilt and manipulate him.
- Be that as it may, she, as we'll see next will get her way, but while she may have succeeded in winning this battle, she will lose the war.

One commentator said it best this way; "Some wives will make themselves a burden to their husbands until they get what they want. This tactic is used because it often works in the short term. But it can poison the relationship and ends up costing more than it gains. ...When a man gives in to his wife's manipulations so as to keep peace, it almost always builds anger and resentment in the man - and guilt in the woman for what she did. The way of manipulation is tempting (because it works), but always brings real destruction."

(17) Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people. (18) So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down: "What *is* sweeter than honey? And what *is* stronger than a lion?" And he said to them: "If you had not plowed with my heifer, You would not have solved my riddle!"

- Lest you think Samson called his wife a heifer, let me hasten to say he's using a metaphor that, the right answer was gotten the wrong way.
- In other words, plowing a field with a heifer is the wrong way to plow a field. You don't plow a field with a heifer you plow a field with an ox.
- By the way, this won't be the last time Samson acquiesces to a woman who is constantly nagging at him until he just can't take it any more.

Charles Spurgeon - "Here he began to learn that a heathen wife was not to be trusted. How could he expect that she, who worshipped a false god, would be true to him! How sad it was that he did not profit by this experience. ...Thus, ill-blood was engendered by the wedding festivities. How can we hope things to go well if we mingle with the unregenerate? Samson was acting very wrongly in all this, but God was overruling it to make him come forth as Philistia's foe, and Israel's champion."

(19) Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes *of clothing* to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. (20) And Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, who had been his best man.

- I find it interesting that Samson would make good on his bet, even though he lost it in a deceptive way. But, it came from killing thirty men.
- It seems that everyone lost in all of this. What's so sad about this is none of it would've happened had Samson not sought her for a wife.
- He even loses her as a wife this because in verse twenty we're told she was given to his best man. This was truly a lose-lose for everyone.

- One last thing here before we close our study of this chapter. Notice that Samson becomes so furious he goes back to his father's house.
- It's not so much "that" he got angry, it's more about "why" he got angry, or maybe better said, "what" it is that he did not get angry about.
- Samson is not angry about having disobeyed the Lord and dishonored his parents, he is angry because the Philistines out smarted him.